



Log # 2023-4560

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 27, 2023, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) received an Initiation Report² from Lieutenant Charles Artz reporting alleged misconduct by a member of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). Lieutenant Artz alleged that on September 27, 2023, Sergeant Eric Wright punched ██████████ ██████████ in the chest area while he was handcuffed.³ Upon review of the evidence, COPA served additional allegations that Sergeant Wright attempted to grab ██████████ without justification and called and/or referred to ██████████ as a “little fucker.” Following its investigation, COPA reached Sustained findings regarding the allegations of attempting to grab ██████████ without justification and calling and/or referring to ██████████ as a “little fucker.”

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE⁴

On September 27, 2023, BWC depicted Sergeant Eric Wright in the Citgo Gas Station parking lot, located at 10007 S. Michigan Avenue, when he observed three males walking through the parking lot.⁵ One of the males, later identified as ██████████ ██████████ was walking and clutching his left arm against his body as if he was concealing a firearm.⁶ ██████████ walked across the street to approximately 83 E. 100th Street, where Sergeant Wright approached him. Sergeant Wright attempted to perform a protective pat down on ██████████ but ██████████ attempted to flee. When ██████████ attempted to flee, Sergeant Wright conducted an emergency takedown on him, causing ██████████ to drop a loaded firearm.⁷

██████████ and ██████████ who were walking with ██████████ approached Sergeant Wright and attempted to interfere. ██████████ told Sergeant Wright not to touch him, and Sergeant Wright grabbed him and placed him into custody while other officers grabbed and

¹ Appendix A includes case identifiers such as the date, time, and location of the incident, the involved parties and their demographics, and the applicable rules and policies.

² Att. 2.

³ One or more of these allegations fall within COPA’s jurisdiction pursuant to Chicago Municipal Code § 2-78-120. Therefore, COPA determined it would be the primary investigative agency in this matter.

⁴ The following is a summary of what COPA finds most likely occurred during this incident. This summary utilized information from several different sources, including body worn camera (BWC) footage, case and arrest reports, and interviews.

⁵ Att. 5, BWC of Sergeant Wright, at 0:44.

⁶ Att. 1, Arrest Report for ██████████

⁷ Att. 10, BWC of Sergeant Tollier, at 2:11.

detained ██████████ attempted to flee but was detained and placed in handcuffs.⁸ While ██████████ was in handcuffs, Sergeant Wright attempted to speak with him. Sergeant Wright took ██████████ cell phone, and ██████████ asked, “What the fuck you doing?”⁹ Sergeant Wright told him that he was taking his phone and then attempted to grab ██████████ while he was handcuffed and being held by officers.¹⁰ Sergeant Wright then called ██████████ a “little fucker.”¹¹

During COPA’s statement with Sergeant Wright,¹² he did not recall why he called ██████████ a “little fucker.”¹³ Sergeant Wright stated that he attempted to grab ██████████ because he was trying to command authority, but he did not make contact. Sergeant Wright explained that he wanted to pull ██████████ closer to him so they could talk.¹⁴ Sergeant Wright stated that he was not trying to use force.¹⁵ Sergeant Wright completed a Tactical Response Report (TRR) that documented that he attempted to grab ██████████ by the jacket area in an effort to bring him closer to illustrate the seriousness of his potentially dangerous actions, at which time, detaining officers moved ██████████ out of Sergeant Wright’s reach.¹⁶

III. ALLEGATIONS

Sergeant Eric Wright:

1. Struck ██████████ in the chest area, without justification.
 - Unfounded
2. Attempted to grab ██████████ without justification.
 - Sustained in violation of Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.
3. Called and/or referred to ██████████ as a “little fucker.”
 - Sustained in violation of Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.

IV. CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT

This investigation did not reveal any evidence that caused COPA to doubt the credibility of any individuals who provided statements.

V. ANALYSIS¹⁷

(a) Use of Force

⁸ Att. 8, BWC of Officer Blackamore, at 2:41.

⁹ Att. 8 at 3:40.

¹⁰ Att. 6, BWC of Officer Helstern-Wood, at 05:40.

¹¹ Att. 6 at 5:42.

¹² Att. 15, Sergeant Wright’s Audio Statement; Att. 16, Sergeant Wright’s Audio Transcripts.

¹³ Att. 16, pg.9, Ins. 14 to 18.

¹⁴ Att. 16, pg. 12, Ins. 11 to 13.

¹⁵ Att. 16, pg. 9, Ins. 1 to 13.

¹⁶ Att. 4, TRR, pg. 2.

¹⁷ For a definition of COPA’s findings and standards of proof, *see* Appendix B.

COPA finds that Allegation #1 against Sergeant Wright, in that he struck ██████ in the chest area without justification, **Unfounded**. BWC depicted Sergeant Wright attempting to grab ██████ with an open hand, not punching him in the chest area.¹⁸ Therefore, COPA finds the allegation Unfounded.

COPA finds that Allegation #2 against Sergeant Wright, in that he attempted to grab ██████ jacket without justification, **Sustained**. CPD policy says a person who fails to comply with verbal directives is a passive resister. Holding techniques, compliance techniques, control techniques, and oleoresin capsicum (OC spray) are the only options that are authorized when dealing with a passive resister.¹⁹ Here, ██████ was handcuffed and detained by officers when Sergeant Wright attempted to grab ██████ by his jacket. The reason that Sergeant Wright was not able to grab ██████ was due to the detaining officers pulling ██████ out of Sergeant Wright's reach, which Sergeant Wright documented in his TRR. There was no reason for Sergeant Wright to attempt to grab ██████ when he could have easily walked closer to him and spoken with him or talked to ██████ from where he was initially standing, which was within arm's reach. Therefore, COPA finds the allegation Sustained against Sergeant Wright, in violation of CPD policy and Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.

(b) Verbal Abuse

COPA finds that Allegation #3 against Sergeant Wright, in that he called and/or referred to ██████ as a "little fucker," **Sustained**. CPD Rules 8 and 9 prohibit members from engaging in unjustified verbal altercations and/or maltreating or disrespecting any persons.²⁰ Additionally, CPD policy mandates that all "members treat all persons with courtesy and dignity which inherently due every person as a human being. Department members will act, speak, and conduct themselves in a professional manner ... and maintain a courteous attitude in all contacts with the public."²¹ The policy also states that members "will not exhibit a condescending attitude or direct any derogatory terms toward any person in any manner."²² In addition, CPD policy mandates that Department members will model appropriate conduct, including, but not limited to, consistently demonstrating professionalism, courtesy, and respect toward all people with whom they interact.²³ BWC depicted that Sergeant Wright called ██████ a "little fucker."²⁴ Therefore, COPA finds the allegation Sustained against Sergeant Wright, in violation of CPD policy and Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.

¹⁸ Att. 6 at: 5:40.

¹⁹ Att.17, G03-02-01 IV (B)(1), Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective June 28, 2023, to present).

²⁰ Section V., Rules 8 and 9 of the Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department.

²¹ Att. 18, G02-01 III (B), Human Rights and Resources (effective June 30, 2022, to present): Att.19, G02-04 II (C), Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias Based Policing (effective February 1, 2023, to present).

²² Att.18, G02-01 III (D).

²³ Att. 21, G01-09 II (C)(2)(b), Supervisory Responsibilities (effective May 10, 2021, to present).

²⁴ Att. 6 at 5:42.

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION

a. Sergeant Eric Wright:

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History²⁵

Sergeant Wright has received 162 various awards. Additionally, in 2023, Sergeant Wright received a SPAR for Reports – Failure to Report Incident.

ii. Recommended Discipline

Here, COPA has found that Sergeant Wright attempted to grab [REDACTED] without justification and called and/or referred to [REDACTED] as a “little fucker.” Sergeant Wright’s actions have the potential to influence his subordinates. As a supervisor, Sergeant Wright has a responsibility to demonstrate professionalism and respect toward all people and model appropriate conduct in front of his subordinates. Given Sergeant Wright’s complimentary and disciplinary history, COPA recommends that Sergeant Wright be suspended for **1-2 days**.

Approved:

[REDACTED]

2-29-24

LaKenya White
Director of Investigations

Date

²⁵ Att. 20.

Appendix ACase Details

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	September 27, 2023 / 02:37 pm/ 83 E. 100 th Street
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	September 28, 2023 / 12:08 pm
Involved Member #1:	Eric Wright star # 2219, employee ID# [REDACTED] October 17, 2011, 005 District, Male, Black
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] Male, Black

Applicable Rules

- Rule 2:** Any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
- Rule 3:** Any failure to promote the Department's efforts to implement its policy or accomplish its goals.
- Rule 5:** Failure to perform any duty.
- Rule 6:** Disobedience of an order or directive, whether written or oral.
- Rule 8:** Disrespect to or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.
- Rule 9:** Engaging in any unjustified verbal or physical altercation with any person, while on or off duty.
- Rule 10:** Inattention to duty.
- Rule 14:** Making a false report, written or oral.
- Rule 38:** Unlawful or unnecessary use or display of a weapon.
- Rule __:** *[Insert text of any additional rule(s) violated]*

Applicable Policies and Laws

- G02-01: Protection of Human Rights (effective June 30, 2022, to present).
- G03-02-02: Incidents Requiring the Completion of a Tactical Response Report (effective June 28, 2023, to present).
- G01-09: Supervisory Responsibilities (effective May 10, 2021, to present).

Appendix B

Definition of COPA’s Findings and Standards of Proof

For each Allegation, COPA must make one of the following findings:

1. Sustained – where it is determined the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence;
2. Not Sustained – where it is determined there is insufficient evidence to prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
3. Unfounded – where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that an allegation is false or not factual; or
4. Exonerated – where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that the conduct described in the allegation occurred, but it is lawful and proper.

A **preponderance of evidence** can be described as evidence indicating that it is **more likely than not** that a proposition is proved.²⁶ For example, if the evidence gathered in an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the conduct complied with CPD policy than that it did not, even if by a narrow margin, then the preponderance of the evidence standard is met.

Clear and convincing evidence is a higher standard than a preponderance of the evidence but lower than the “beyond-a-reasonable doubt” standard required to convict a person of a criminal offense. Clear and convincing can be defined as a “degree of proof, which, considering all the evidence in the case, produces the firm and abiding belief that it is highly probable that the proposition . . . is true.”²⁷

²⁶ See *Avery v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 216 Ill. 2d 100, 191 (2005) (a proposition is proved by a preponderance of the evidence when it is found to be more probably true than not).

²⁷ *People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036, ¶ 28 (quoting Illinois Pattern Jury Instructions, Criminal, No. 4.19 (4th ed. 2000)).

Appendix C

Transparency and Publication Categories

Check all that apply:

- Abuse of Authority
- Body Worn Camera Violation
- Coercion
- Death or Serious Bodily Injury in Custody
- Domestic Violence
- Excessive Force
- Failure to Report Misconduct
- False Statement
- Firearm Discharge
- Firearm Discharge – Animal
- Firearm Discharge – Suicide
- Firearm Discharge – Unintentional
- First Amendment
- Improper Search and Seizure – Fourth Amendment Violation
- Incidents in Lockup
- Motor Vehicle Incidents
- OC Spray Discharge
- Search Warrants
- Sexual Misconduct
- Taser Discharge
- Unlawful Denial of Access to Counsel
- Unnecessary Display of a Weapon
- Use of Deadly Force – other
- Verbal Abuse
- Other Investigation